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GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

REPORT OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

Alicante, Spain, 12-15 July 1999

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 1999

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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is the final version of the report adopted in Alicante by the twenty-fourth session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) on 15 July 1999.

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ABSTRACT

The twenty-fourth session of GFCM was attended by eight members of the Commission. The main issues discussed by the session were the conclusions of the Extraordinary Session of GFCM which took place from 7 to 9 July in the same venue and which discussed the scale of contributions for an autonomous budget and a tentative programme of work for the intersessional period. The Commission reviewed the intersessional activities and the recommendations of the two sessions of its Scientific Advisory Committees (Rome, Italy, March and June 1999). The Commission could not reach an agreement on the scale of contributions but tentatively agreed on an "indicative annual budget" and adopted a programme of work for the interssessional period - year 2000. The session agreed on priorities for the Scientific Advisory Committee.

Distribution:

Participants in the Session
GFCM Mailing List
FAO Regional and Sub-Regional Fisheries Officers

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OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) held its twenty-fourth session in Alicante, Spain from 12 to 15 July 1999, at the kind invitation of the Government of Spain.

2. The Session was attended by delegates from ten members of the Commission, and by observers from the Palestine Authority, the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The list of delegates and observers is given in Appendix B to this report.

3. It was noted that a quorum was not reached and therefore the Commission would not be in a position to adopt resolutions or take decisions at this Session. This situation was considered regrettable as it undermined the effectiveness of GFCM. As a matter of urgency, the Commission requested that the Chairman should address correspondence (copied to all GFCM members) indicating the need to ensure participation in future GFCM meetings.

4. The meeting was called to order by Mr F. Montanaro Mifsud, Chairman of the Commission, who welcomed the participants and especially Mr Samuel J. Juarez, Secretary General of Marine Fisheries of Spain and Mr Luis Diaz Alperi, Mayor of Alicante. On behalf of the Commission, he expressed particular appreciation for their presence at the opening of this Session.

5. At the invitation of the Chairman of GFCM, Mr Z. Karnicki, Director of the Fishery Policy and Planning Division of the FAO Fisheries Department then addressed the Commission.

6. On behalf of the Director-General of FAO, Dr Jacques Diouf, Mr Karnicki expressed the appreciation of FAO to the Kingdom of Spain and the authorities of the city of Alicante for their generous hospitality and the excellent preparations which had been made for the hosting of the Session. He expressed the hope that in view of the urgent need for management action in several areas the discussions on the budget and scale of contributions which took place at the First Extraordinary Session of GFCM held in Alicante, Spain, from 7 to 9 July 1999 would soon reach a successful conclusion. The Commission could then focus on the urgent problems of management of resources, the environment and fishing capacity, among others.

7. Mr Samuel J. Juarez, Secretary General of Marine Fisheries in his opening speech welcomed the participants to Spain. He went on to say that the choice of Alicante as the venue for the Twenty-fourth Session of the Commission had a symbolic significance as it was at the Twenty-first Session of the then Council which met in Alicante in May 1995 that the first binding resolutions had been made in the long history of GFCM. Since that time, the amendments to the Agreement of the Commission setting up an autonomous budget, the establishment of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and the membership of the European Community and Japan in the Commission, were the major achievements of GFCM.

8. Mr Luis Diaz Alperi, the Mayor of Alicante, also welcomed the participants to Spain and particularly to Alicante, which was a typical Mediterranean city with a long history influenced by Mediterranean culture and geography. He also stated that the City of Alicante

had established a marine reserve in the Island of Tabarca which demonstrated the importance that it gave to the protection of marine resources and environment.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

9. Discussion took place on the Provisional Agenda placed before the Commission and it was agreed that the order of items for discussion should be changed. The Agenda as amended is attached as Appendix A to the report.

10. The documents which were before the Commission are listed in Appendix C.

INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

11. The Secretariat introduced the documents GFCM/XXIV/99/2, 3 and 4 which covered the matters raised under this agenda item.

12. Document GFCM/XXIV/99/4 described the major recommendations of the Twenty-third Session of the Commission (Rome, Italy, July 1998): the necessity to improve the quality and reliability of the statistical systems in the GFCM area; the future of the Working Group on Fisheries Economics and Statistics; the convening of two Sessions of the Scientific Advisory Committee; the organization of an Extraordinary Session to set up a scale of contributions for an autonomous budget; and the preparation by the Secretariat of a proposed amendment to Article X.6 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission.

13. The Secretariat reported on the implementation of these recommendations including the two Sessions of SAC and in particular the implementation by SAC of the decisions of the Commission to set up a Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences to replace the Working Group on Fisheries Economics and Statistics.

14. Concerning the amendment to the Rules of Procedure, the Secretariat proposal was discussed and the following text was endorsed for Article X.6 :

> "The Scientific Advisory Committee, its sub-committees and any working group established under it, shall make every effort to reach agreement by consensus. If this is not possible, all views shall be reported to the Commission."

15. The amendment could not be formulated as a resolution of the Commission. It was therefore agreed to consider it as a recommendation to be placed before the Twenty-fifth Session of the Commission.

16. Four major activities were reported on here:

I. A Meeting of the *Ad hoc* GFCM/ICCAT Joint Working Group on Large Pelagic Fisheries

17. An updating of information on fisheries and stock status of bluefin tuna and swordfish was reported, in which large upward revisions of catches in the Mediterranean were reported, and also recommendations for future research. These revised catches form a new basis for ICCAT stock evaluation. Although work will continue, the meeting felt there would be little benefit in attempting a new swordfish assessment until more information/data were available. The GFCM/ICCAT Working Group expressed concern on the very high catches of juveniles,

the scarcity of large fish in the Mediterranean catches and the age of first maturity possibly reduced due to heavy fishing. Taking into account the precautionary approach, the Genoa meeting strongly recommended the reduction of fishing pressure particularly on juvenile swordfish to ensure the well being of the stock. At present, ICCAT did not have any management measures adopted, but EC and individual countries have such measures adopted and implemented to a varying degree (see document GFCM:SAC2/99/2).

II. Activities of COPEMED

18. The Director of COPEMED informed the meeting about the following COPEMED activities:

a) Training

An assessment of training needs in the three southern COPEMED countries has been undertaken and a revision of fisheries strategies and current research programmes carried out.

b) Collection of data and research activities

The Commission was informed that the COPEMED project was providing substantial assistance to the improvement of the statistical systems. The collection of data at the national level (supporting the development and updating of the fishery statistics system) and at the regional level (the establishment of port sampling networks and the continuous development of databases) was being supported. With respect to research, COPEMED offered to cooperate in meeting specific requests from the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) but was already supporting research on bluefin tuna, swordfish and deep sea shrimp. A major activity on artisanal fisheries has been carried out since 1997.

c) Dissemination of information

COPEMED informed the Commission that a Web site and regular publications are on the way. The participants were also provided with a CD Rom Encyclopedia on marine resources.

d) Advice on fishery management

To facilitate advice on fishery management, the following activities have been foreseen:

- collection of data in order first to compile and then try to harmonize fishery regulations at least in terms of the Resolutions and recommendations made by GFCM;
- preparation of dialogue meetings (FORUM), with the presence of the public administrations, the fishing industry and scientists in order to discuss such topics of common interest as, for example:
    - feasibility of the control of effort by different fleets in transboundary stocks;
    - joint analysis of the feasibility for the establishment of common closure areas and seasons in shared fisheries; and
    - analysis and subsequent harmonization of fishery regulations.

19. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the support that it had received from the work of COPEMED.

III. Consultation on the Application of Article 9 of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in the Mediterranean Region

20. The Technical Secretary of the Committee on Aquaculture informed the Commission on the preparatory work that has been carried out in preparation for the Consultation on the Application of Article 9 of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in the Mediterranean. This meeting, which should set the main framework for the activities of the Committee on Aquaculture in the future, has been requested and funded by the Italian Government following the advice of recent sessions of COFI and GFCM.

21. The Technical Secretary also presented the activities of the four networks operating under the aegis of GFCM: SIPAM, the regional Centre of which is hosted by Tunisia, and TECAM, SELAM and EAM which were at present coordinated with CIHEAM.

22. Within the framework of SIPAM the activities reported included the organization of the meeting of national coordinators, last year in Portugal, where the new software was discussed and the situation of the databases was analyzed. Other activities such as a refresher course for national coordinators, was organized in Zaragoza, Spain (February 1999). The home page of SIPAM has also almost been completed and the staffing situation in the Regional Centre has been improved by the Tunisian Government with the addition of a programmer and of a documentalist. A database on pathology was discussed at an expert meeting held in Rome in December 1998.

23. In the case of the networks coordinated through CIHEAM, a Seminar on Advances on Species Diversification was held in Zaragoza, Spain, in May 1999, with the participation of more than 80 experts. The preparation of the surveys on existing capabilities on aquaculture nutrition, aquaculture genetics, aquaculture fish health management and marketing of aquaculture products has commenced in 1999. The organization of the database on marketing carried out with the assistance of ICRAM and IFREMER was commenced last year and will be continued in this intersessional period thanks to the support of ICRAM. In addition, two meetings were scheduled, the first one, a Seminar on Global Quality Assessment for Aquaculture Products in the Mediterranean (Barcelona, Spain, November 1999) and the second a Seminar on Environmental Impact Assessment of Mediterranean Aquaculture Farms (Zaragoza, Spain, early in 2000).

IV. The International Plans of Action

24. The European Community asked for information on the state of play with regard to the three International Plans of Action and to activities connected with illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, with a view to their application to GFCM.

25. The Secretariat informed the Commission on the present status of the follow-up actions undertaken by FAO since the Twenty-third Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) (February 1999) and the Ministerial Meeting on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (March 1999).

REVIEW OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST AND SECOND SESSIONS OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

26. This agenda item was introduced by Mr J. Camiñas, Chairman of SAC. The First and Second Sessions of SAC were held at FAO Headquarters in Rome from 23 to 26 March and from 7 to 10 June 1999 respectively.

27. The First Session addressed the topics assigned to SAC by the Commission at its Twenty-third Session namely: a) definition of fishery management units; b) definition of appropriate parameters for measuring fishing effort; c) identification of the actual state of resources and available methodologies for determining this status; and d) organization of the future work of the Committee: structure, functioning and databases.

28. Progress was made on all of the above items but final reporting was not yet possible. This would require further attention by SAC, its subsidiary bodies and the *ad hoc* working groups SAC was setting up to examine these questions. Inevitably, SAC was obliged to spend significant time organizing its future work, which involved: a) defining the terms of reference for its four sub-committees and electing their coordinators (see GFCM/XXIV/99/Inf.4), setting up working groups to examine the geographical coordinates of the 27 provisional management units proposed for consideration by the First Session of SAC; c) defining the required data on fleets, including also artisanal vessels, to be included in the regional register of vessels as a necessary starting point to monitor fishing effort.

29. Concerning appropriate management units, although a formal report on this item would have to be postponed to the Twenty-fifth Session of GFCM, it was already clear that the following three types of management areas will have to be considered.

a) for large pelagics: all of FAO area 37 will constitute a management unit (which for bluefin tuna forms part of the Eastern Atlantic stock area);

b) for deep water resources, the three large water areas in sub-divisions 37.1, 37.2 and 37.3 will probably constitute areas for management; and

c) for small pelagic and shelf demersal species, more information will be needed in order to better define limits, but using natural geographical limits, 27 potential management units were discussed (11 in the Western Mediterranean, 7 in the Central Mediterranean, 6 for the Eastern Mediterranean and 3 for the Black Sea and adjacent waters).

30. The Chairman of SAC recalled that the regional database on fishing effort, including the minimal set of data identified for industrial and artisanal vessels, should be structured in terms of the fishing grounds falling within each of these management units.

31. The Sub-Committee for Stock Assessment (SCSA) held its first meeting parallel to the Second Session of SAC. From its report, it emerged that the first priority for assessment will have to be for those resources falling into the shared, straddling and highly migratory categories.

32. While reporting on the Second Session of SAC, its Chairman emphasized the fact that although 17 Members participated some countries were not represented by scientists. He also recalled that the Committee suggested that GFCM should allocate a budget which would encompass all the activities of the four Sub-Committees. This budget should also include provisions for publication of SAC reports and documents.

33. In the discussions following the reporting by the Chairman of SAC, the Commission commended the concrete progress made within SAC and thanked its Chairman for the good work so far achieved.

34. GFCM endorsed the reports of the First and Second Sessions of SAC.

35. The delegation of the European Community presented a list of priorities for future work taking into consideration results already achieved. The Commission endorsed these priorities although it was evident that full consideration of these points extended beyond the Third Session of SAC (see Appendix D).

36. Taking into consideration the activities with which the Scientific Advisory Committee was entrusted and referring to paragraph 4 of document GFCM/XXIV/99/3 entitled "Conclusions of the First Session of the Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment", the Tunisian delegation proposed that the Scientific Advisory Committee continue to give priority to stock assessment issues. To this effect, the Committee was invited to pursue the actions already initiated in this field by the First Session of the Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment, particularly in the field of stock assessment of swordfish and shared stocks.

37. The delegation of Cyprus, while not in disagreement with the EC proposals, noted that they related mainly to the Sub-Committee for Stock Assessment and made no specific references to the work of other Sub-Committees of SAC.

38. A list of national experts to participate in the respective networks of the Sub-Committees was presented. It was also emphasized that liaison with other institutions dealing with environment conservation and biodiversity should be strengthened.

39. The results of the meeting of the GFCM/ICCAT working group were reviewed. SAC was of the opinion that a new evaluation and update of analyses regarding swordfish was necessary in 2000, assuming that related data will be made available in good time to the Secretariat. It was also considered necessary to adjust the resolutions related to regulating catches of bluefin tuna in the Mediterranean, within a scientific perspective. The Committee had also urged COPEMED to intensify efforts to facilitate the participation in project activities of representatives of non-project member countries, in particular in support of the activities of the working group on socio-economic indicators which is a priority activity of the Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences.

40. The need to extend to the Eastern Mediterranean a project format similar to COPEMED and ADRIAMED was recommended by SAC. This was endorsed by GFCM.

41. It was suggested that the Third Session of SAC be held in May 2000 back-to-back with meetings of each of its Sub-Committees.

DECISIONS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF MEDITERRANEAN FISHERY RESOURCES

42. Since a quorum was not present at the Twenty-fourth Session, this Commission meeting could only formulate non binding recommendations. If appropriate, these might be converted into binding resolutions at the next full session of the Commission.

43. The four management resolutions adopted by the Twenty-first Session of the (then) Council held in Alicante, Spain in May 1995 and the three resolutions adopted by the Twenty-second Session, were reviewed. In general, these resolutions were believed to be still valid, but not fully complied with, and progress in implementation needed to be monitored. In particular, Resolution 95/4 called on GFCM members to prepare a list of fishing boats operating from national ports in the Mediterranean and provide this to the GFCM Secretariat in the form specified by that Session. It was noted that the Second Session of SAC had regarded this unfulfilled resolution as essential for its future work, and had in fact requested that this list include artisanal vessels operating from each port in each sub-area.

44. The Commission endorsed the application of the ICCAT recommendations adopted notably in November 1998 (Appendix G) which may result in amendments to GFCM Resolutions 95/1 and 97/3.

45. The observer of ICCAT informed the meeting that members of ICCAT which were also members of GFCM may have difficulties in enforcing measures decided on by the two organizations until GFCM updated its Resolutions. Special reference was made to the closed period of purse seine fishing in the Mediterranean Sea which are now different for the two organizations.

46. With respect to new recommendations, several were extracted from the reports of SAC that were relevant to fisheries management, as follows :

- all efforts should be made to ensure full reporting of catches of swordfish, bluefin tuna and relevant biological information to the Secretary of GFCM by non-members of ICCAT in order to allow new assessments to be made;
- member countries should consider measures aimed at stabilizing or even reducing fishing pressure on swordfish; and
- due caution should be exercised in starting new fisheries which may adversely affect existing fisheries for other resources : the example of immediate concern was the possible impact of deep-water fisheries of the continental slope on the spawning populations of species supporting shelf fisheries for small or pre-mature fish.

47. All efforts should be made to locate the resources needed to address the unresolved questions of resource assessment and management in the Eastern Mediterranean.

PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD AND REQUESTS FOR ADVICE TO SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF GFCM

48. The Secretariat introduced this item on the basis of document GFCM/XXIV/99/5 Rev.3. It was emphasized that, in the absence of an autonomous budget, the next intersessional period will still be an interim period budget-wise, for which extra-budgetary funding will have to be sought in order to support activities decided upon by the Commission itself and/or recommended by the Scientific Advisory Committee as well as the Committee on Aquaculture.

49. The Secretary presented briefly the proposed programme for the intersessional period, and the Technical Secretary of the Aquaculture Committee presented additional explanations on the activities which are proposed for the four networks of the Committee on Aquaculture.

The observer of CIHEAM, which co-finances activities of three of the networks, explained the modalities of intervention of his organization and offered to establish collaboration in the future also for the activities of SAC.

50. The Commission then reviewed a proposal prepared by the EC delegation which listed the meetings that were considered of high priority. The proposal included the following meetings:

- Twenty-fifth Session of GFCM;
- Third Session of SAC
- One session respectively of each of its four Sub-Committees;
- Meetings of working groups, namely: small pelagics; demersals (these two groups to address fishing effort and management units) and the GFCM/ICCAT working group on large pelagics; and
- Second Session of the Committee on Aquaculture as well as annual aquaculture network activities.

51. The Commission agreed on this list and requested the Secretariat to establish priorities for the activities of the aquaculture networks.

52. The proposed programme of work for the intersessional period (year 2000) is summarized in Appendix E. It was pointed out by the delegation of Cyprus that it contained a large number of meetings and that this would cause difficulties for some members as it would translate into assigning substantial financial and human resources for GFCM work which may be lacking in those countries. While some members supported assigning funds to support the participation of staff from countries with low financial means, other members opposed this idea, indicating that such funds should come from extra-budgetary sources.

53. In order to reduce the cost of the meetings envisaged for the next intersessional period it was agreed that the Session of the Committee on Aquaculture would be held in two languages only.

54. The Secretariat informed the Commission that the financing of the Twenty-fifth Session of GFCM was secured under the FAO regular programme budget.

55. Concerning the other meetings planned for the forthcoming intersessional period, the Commission welcomed proposals from some members concerning the financing of GFCM activities: Spain offered to cover the cost of the annual session of SAC, as well as the meeting of the working group on small pelagics and some activities of the aquaculture network. The Commission expressed its appreciation and accepted the offer. Italy expressed its readiness to envisage the possibility of making a contribution towards the cost of one of the proposed meetings. France offered to host the working group on demersal species.

56. The Commission called for a special effort by members to support the cost of the other meetings agreed upon.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO AN AUTONOMOUS BUDGET AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE EXTRAORDINARY SESSION ON FINANCING FUTURE GFCM ACTIVITIES

Scale of Contribution

57. The Chairman summarized the discussions that took place on this agenda item during the Extraordinary Session which was financed by the EC (GFCM/XXIV/99/Inf.5). He also recalled that since two-thirds of the Members of the Commission had not yet deposited the instruments of acceptance of the amendments to the Agreement of GFCM relevant to an autonomous budget, the present Session could not formally adopt either the scale of contributions or the budget. However, the meeting could agree on the substance of the scale of contributions and thereby pave the way for its adoption at a later stage once the amendments to the Agreement have been accepted by two-thirds of the Members. A consensus on the substance of the scale of contributions would also make it easier for Members to accept the amendments and bring them, and the provision for an autonomous budget, into force in the knowledge of what their obligations would be in practice.

58. In the light of the above consideration, the Commission invited the Chairman and/or the Director-General of FAO to address a communication to member countries which had not yet deposited their letters of acceptance, urging them to do so at their earliest convenience in order to bring the amendments to the GFCM Agreement into force and thus enable GFCM to function normally.

59. In the course of its deliberations, the Commission agreed that the Black Sea catches must be included in the calculation of the GFCM tonnage. An alternative scale of contributions using GNP/capita as a criterion for allocating the "wealth component" to Members was also developed. The Secretariat's proposal, contained in document GFCM:ES/99/2, had made use of the FAO Scale of Contribution for assigning the "wealth component" to Members. The various proposals considered by the Commission in its Extraordinary Session are reproduced in the report of that Session.

60. In the course of the subsequent discussion, the Commission considered it essential that the Secretariat formally contact Black Sea member countries to ascertain their intentions in respect of future participation in the work of the Commission. In this context the Secretariat made available to the Commission a note dated 23 July 1998 from the Turkish Representation to FAO on the subject of their participation in the Commission. Some delegations suggested that alternative tables be presented with and without the catches of Black Sea countries.

61. It was agreed that the debate on the scale of contributions would be facilitated if the Commission could reach a common understanding about the total amount expected to be contributed by Members under the autonomous budget. In the course of that discussion, some Members maintained that the total GFCM budget, consisting of the autonomous budget and the FAO contribution, should be in the range of about US $ 750,000. Some members were of the opinion that such a budget should incorporate resources needed to fund participation by some member countries in the various meetings of the Commission, and that a significant proportion of the budget must be allocated to activities in support of aquaculture.

62. One delegation pointed out that the activities to be covered by contributions to FAO under the UN/FAO Scale of Contribution were different from those activities undertaken by a regional fishery commission and therefore considered the UN/FAO scale as inappropriate in

the GFCM context. The same delegation argued that the GNP/capita, suitably grouped, would be an adequate replacement for the UN/FAO Scale of Contribution calculation of the "wealth component".

63. Other members expressed the view that the GNP/capita index places an unfair burden on small member countries.

64. A number of delegations suggested that the basic fee of the autonomous budget should not be increased beyond 10 percent. One delegation suggested that the coefficient used to calculate "GFCM tonnage" be increased for OECD countries.

Autonomous Budget

65. The Commission considered the question of a model budget applicable when the autonomous budget would come into effect. The EC, on the basis of its proposal for an autonomous budget submitted to the Extraordinary Session, outlined its rational for the various components of that budget. The Commission considered a compromise proposal tabled by the delegation of Cyprus.

66. It was agreed that in the model budget, provisions should be made for holding the Commission meeting, the meeting of the Committee on Aquaculture and that of SAC in four languages. There was no consensus on the proposal made by some members that Sub-Committees of SAC and associated working groups meet in two languages.

67. The Commission decided to reproduce in its report, for information purposes, the table containing the "annual model budget" in which the amounts provided for the meeting of the Commission and of SAC would be increased to reflect the decision to hold these meetings in four languages (see Appendix F).

68. It was noted that allocation for publications, translation and general operating expenses were not properly reflected in the "annual model budget" but the Commission decided to leave the door open for future possible modification of the model budget.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

Tribute to Mr John Caddy

69. The Chairman informed the meeting that Mr John Caddy, Technical Secretary of GFCM since 1979 would shortly retire. He acknowledged the sterling services rendered by Mr Caddy to world fisheries in general and to GFCM in particular. The delegations of Spain and Cyprus on behalf of the meeting acknowledged also the competence of Mr Caddy as a scientist and listed the valuable services provided by him to the Commission.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS FOR THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION

70. In the absence of a quorum it was not possible for the Commission to proceed to the election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons. The Commission, recognizing the valuable work of the present Chairperson, decided to extend his mandate for the intersessional period.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION

71. The delegate of Malta informed the Commission that his country offered to host the Twenty-fifth Session of GFCM and to make a contribution towards the costs of the Session. The Commission welcomed this offer and accepted with gratitude. It was agreed that the timing of the Session would be between the first and third week of June 2000.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

72. The report was adopted on 15 July 1999.

APPENDIX A

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Session

2. Adoption of the Agenda and Arrangements for the Session

3. Inter-sessional activities
   - Expert consultation on Article 9 of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
   - GFCM/ICCAT Joint Working Group on Large Pelagic Species
   - Activities of COPEMED (Cooperation Networks to facilitate Coordination to Support Fisheries Management in the Western and Central Mediterranean)
   - Activities of SIPAM (Information System on the Promotion of Aquaculture in the Mediterranean) and other aquaculture networks
   - Follow-up by FAO to the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) three programmes of action concerning management of fishing capacity, shark fisheries and incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries and to the conclusions of the Ministerial Meeting on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries regarding illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.
   - Other activities reported by members.

4. Review of the recommendations of the First and Second Sessions of the Scientific Advisory Committee

5. Decisions on the management of Mediterranean fishery resources

6. Programme of work for the inter-sessional period and requests for advice to subsidiary bodies of GFCM

7. Contributions to an autonomous budget and conclusions of the Extraordinary Session on financing future GFCM activities

8. Any other matters

9. Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for the Twenty-fifth Session

10. Date and place of the Twenty-fifth Session

11. Adoption of the Report

APPENDIX B

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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APPENDIX C

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

GFCM/XXIV/99/1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
GFCM/XXIV/99/2	Review of the Recommendations of the First Session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (March 1999)
GFCM/XXIV/99/3	Review of the Recommendations of the Second Session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (June 1999)
GFCM/XXIV/99/4	Intersessional Activities
GFCM/XXIV/99/5	Programme of Work for the Intersessional Period (July 1999-July 2000)
GFCM/XXIV/99/Inf.1	Provisional List of Documents
GFCM/XXIV/99/Inf.2	Provisional List of Participants
GFCM/XXIV/99/Inf.3	Report of the First Session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (Rome, 23-26 March 1999)
GFCM/XXIV/99/Inf.4	Report of the Second Session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (Rome, 7-10 June 1999)
GFCM/XXIV/99/Inf.5	Report of the Extraordinary Session of GFCM (Alicante, Spain, 8-10 July 1999)
GFCM/XXIV/99/Inf.6	Single Declaration by the European Community on the Exercise of Competence and Voting Rights According to Article II(6) of the GFCM Agreement

APPENDIX D

PRIORITIES FOR THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Commission appreciates the outcome of the recent work undertaken by SAC. Considerable progress has been achieved in the definition and consolidation of an operative structure and working procedures for the Committee and in the definition of a geographical context for future work. The Commission endorses the terms of reference of the sub-committees proposed by SAC as a long-term framework to progress in providing sound, solid and objective advice for fisheries management.

At the same time, the Commission acknowledges that, although certain issues on which SAC was requested advice have not been fully addressed due to their complexity, the discussions held in that context have led to improvement of the awareness of scientific institutions about research priorities for the near future. SAC should continue to give attention to these problems, and in particular to the definition of management units, to the parameters useful for the management of fishing effort and to the problem of juveniles.

The Commission endorses the conclusions of the Chairman of the sub-committee for stock assessment and encourages SAC to promote the development of these as standing terms of reference for SAC. Emphasis should be placed on stock assessment by the working groups proposed. Moreover, the Commission endorses the establishment of working groups covering the three groups of stocks (large pelagics, small pelagics and demersals, including invertebrates).

For its third meeting, SAC is requested to:

On the issue of fishing effort:

1. Define, by management unit, groups of vessels which, given the fishing gear currently used and other characteristics such as fishing pattern, target groups of species, vessel size, etc, may constitute operational units for the management of fishing effort. As examples, these could be "purse seiners below xm overall length", "pelagic trawlers of more than x GT", "vessels below xm overall length using fixed gear ", etc.

2. For each of these groups, define which parameters are more closely related to the effective fishing power of individual vessels. The parameters should be given separately for the vessel and for the gear. For each parameter, describe its relative importance, ease of measurement and possibility of management. In the case of small vessel, define which parameters related to fishing power can be measured for the whole group by sampling and which parameters may be subject to an effort management scheme. For all groups, decide which time parameters (time absent from port, soaking time, haul duration, etc) may be used in an effort management scheme.

3. Collect information on economic and social indices associated to the above-mentioned effort parameters, by management unit, in order to set the basis for an assessment of the economic and social consequences of variations resulting from a possible management of fishing effort.

On the issue of juvenile fish:

4. Improve knowledge on the likelihood and effects on assessment of alternative hypothesis about natural mortality (age-dependent M, constant M) and on the "refugium" effect (non-availability to the fishery of certain parts of the fish population).

5. Provide a table of lengths at first capture (l_{25}, l_{50}) and other selectivity parameters for the most important commercial species when fishing with towed and fixed gears, and for a wide range of mesh sizes and, where appropriate, hook sizes, and to promote, where necessary, selectivity experiments.

6. Provide a summary of zones and seasons of concentration of juveniles. For these zones, give the mean species composition of the catch by the groups of vessels mentioned under 1) above

7. Provide tables of prices by size for the most important commercial species in a variety of markets.

On the ICCAT-GFCM joint assessment of large pelagic species:

8. Progress in assembling the data required for stock assessment.

Other Management Issues

9. Improve knowledge on the management units and issues of shared and straddling stocks.

APPENDIX E

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD – YEAR 2000 (FIRST PRIORITIES)

MEETING	DATE	PLACE	DURATION (Days)	WORKING LANGUAGES	COSTS (US$)	FINANCED BY	REMARKS
Small Pelagics Working Group	Between 1 and 8 March	Spain	4	Without interpretation			
Demersals Working Group	Between 15 and 30 March	France	4	Without interpretation			
GFCM/ICCAT	2nd Semester		5	2	10.000		For non Staff travel.
Aquaculture Committee (2nd Session)	1st Semester	Rome ?	4	2	33.000		
Sub-Committees (4)	25-30 April		4	Without interpretation	3.000		
SAC – Annual Session	1-5 May	Spain	4	4	50.000	Spain	
GFCM – 25th Session	June	Malta	4	4	55.000	FAO/Malta	Co-financing
ANNUAL NETWORK ACTIVITIES							
Annual meeting of SIPAM Coordinators	Tentative December 1999 or January 2000		3	1	23.000		
Workshop SELAM on Quality of Aquaculture Products	November 1999	Barcelona (Spain)	3	2	15.000		Interpretation costs paid by CIHEAM
Workshop on Environmental Impact of Aquacuture Facilities	January 2000	Zaragoza (Spain)	4	2	30.000		Interpretation costs paid by CIHEAM

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD – YEAR 2000

AQUACULTURE NETWORKS
LOWER PRIORITY

MEETING	DATE	PLACE	DURATION (Days)	WORKING LANGUAGES	COSTS (US$)	FINANCED BY	REMARKS
Workshop on Aquaculture Health Legislation	2nd half 2000		3	1	30.000		
Meeting on Follow-up of Consultation on Article 9 of CCRF	February/March 2000		3	1	15.000		
Completion of Surveys on Aquaculture (4)					15.000	FAO/CIHEAM	

APPENDIX F

INDICATIVE ANNUAL BUDGET

GFCM Secretariat	
Staff	**US$ (000)**
Secretary (P-5)	136
Stock Assessment Specialist (P-4)	123
Statistician/Computer Programme Specialist (P-3)	95
Administrative/Finance Clerk (G-5)	64
Secretary/Typist (G-4)	56
Miscellaneous	10
Travel	6
Printing Costs	4
SUB-TOTAL	**494**
Meetings	
Annual GFCM Session	50
Annual Meeting of SAC	50
Biennial Meeting of Committee on Aquaculture	25
Meetings of SAC Sub-Committees*	3*
GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Large Pelagic Species	30
Other Meetings (includes SIPAM)	47
Support to inter sessional activities (includes aquaculture networks activities)	57
TOTAL	**756**

* This figure does not allow for interpretation. Should such interpretation be required, the allocation would have to be adopted accordingly.

APPENDIX G

ICCAT REGULATIONS WHICH HAVE EFFECTS ON HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA BUT NOT YET UPDATED BY GFCM

(UPDATE OF GFCM RESOLUTION 95/1)

RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON THE LIMITATION OF CATCHES OF BLUEFIN TUNA IN THE EASTERN ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN

This Recommendation was adopted by ICCAT at its eleventh Extraordinary Session, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 16-23 November 1998.

IN VIEW OF the 1998 stock assessment on bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean by the Commission's Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), indicating that an annual catch level equal or higher than 33,000 MT would not be sustainable,

RECOGNIZING the need to reconcile the necessary conservation of the stock with the needs of coastal fishing communities which are dependent mainly on fishing for this stock,

RECALLING that Croatia was undergoing a state of war during the early 1990s,

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS:

1. That a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 32,000 MT for 1999 and of 29,500 MT for 2000 be established.

2. That in order to establish an allocation of fishing possibilities, the catches of years 1993 and 1994 (whichever is higher), as laid down by SCRS before 1998, be used as reference, except in the case of Croatia, for which a specific quota is set for 1999.

3. That according to paragraph 2 above, the following allocation scheme be established*

	1999	*2000*
China (People's Republic)	82 MT	76 MT
Croatia	950 MT	876 MT
European Community (EC) **	20,165 MT	18,590 MT
Japan	3,199 MT	2,949 MT
Korea	672 MT	619 MT
Libya	1,300 MT	1,199 MT
Morocco	820 MT	756 MT
Tunisia	2,326 MT	2,144 MT

4. Quantities to be deducted from the 1999 catch quota under the terms of paragraph 2 of the *"Recommendation by ICCAT Regarding Compliance in the Bluefin Tuna and North Atlantic Swordfish Fisheries"*, shall be calculated for all Contracting Parties,

with respect to the catch data referred to in paragraph 2 above, as revised by SCRS in 1998.

5. These provisions replace the 1995 "*Recommendation by ICCAT on Supplemental Management Measures for Eastern Atlantic Bluefin Tuna*".

6. For those non-contracting parties, entities or fishing entities with catches of bluefin tuna in the east Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea from 1993 onwards, the catch limit for 1999 and 2000 will be calculated according to paragraph 2.

1999	*2000*
2,486***	2,291***

* Quota allocations for the year 2000 may be reviewed in light of agreements deriving from discussions of the Working Group on Allocation Criteria that will meet in 1999.

* * This share is calculated by adding the relative shares of each Member State of the European Community, in accordance with the terms of paragraph 2.

*** This total includes a special allocation to Chinese Taipei of 714 MT in 1999 and 658 MT in the year 2000, as Chinese Taipei has cooperating status.

(UPDATE OF GFCM RESOLUTION 97/3)

RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT CONCERNING THE CHANGES OF CLOSED SEASON FOR THE PURSE SEINE FISHERY FISHING FOR BLUEFIN TUNA IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

This Recommendation was adopted at the 1998 Commission meeting.

CONSIDERING the need to take measures regarding the gears used during periods when their impact is most notable on juveniles as well as on spawning stock;

CONSIDERING the insufficient efforts made by Contracting Parties to reduce their own catches of the bluefin tuna in accordance with different Recommendation adopted by the Commission:

CONSIDERING the highly-migratory characteristics of bluefin tunas, including juveniles, as well as the appearance of these juveniles at different times in different areas of the Mediterranean Sea:

CONSIDERING and *RECALLING* the conclusions of the Commission=s Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) that the existing closed season is not established on scientific data, as well as the obligation of each Contracting Party to provide data about catch composition throughout the fishing season for the Mediterranean Sea and which was provided for the Adriatic Sea;

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS:

1. prohibiting purse seine fishing in the Adriatic Sea during the period from 1 - 31 May, in order to protect juveniles;

2. prohibiting purse seine fishing in the other areas of the Mediterranean Sea during the period from 16 July - 15 August in order to protect juveniles;

3. The border line between Adriatic and other parts of the Mediterranean will be the line which connects the Albanian - Greek border line and Cape Santa Maria- Leuca

4. that each Contracting Party, Cooperating non-contracting Party, entity or fishing entity which has a purse seine bluefin tuna fishery in areas of the Mediterranean Sea prohibit any transfer of its fleets to either of the two areas during the above respective closed seasons referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 above;

5. that this recommendation replace the regulatory measure currently in effect on a closed season for the Mediterranean bluefin tuna purse seine fishing.

(NEW RECOMMENDATION)

SUPPLEMENTAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES: CONCERNING AGE 0 BLUEFIN TUNA

The following Recommendation was adopted by the Commission in 1996 and modified in 1998.

CONSIDERING the Recommendations adopted by the Commission in 1974 and 1994 concerning bluefin tuna minimum size;

IN ORDER to facilitate commercial transactions without jeopardizing the quality of information on catches and trade of bluefin tuna;

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS:

FIRST: the prohibition of retaining on board, landing and sale of fish less than 3.2 kg by fishing vessels of Contracting Parties and non-Contracting Parties.

SECOND: that adequate measures be taken by the Commission in November 1997 to guarantee greater transparency and more reliability of statistics, with the aim of identifying the origin of catches.

This Recommendation is supplemental to the minimum size regulations currently in effect on bluefin tuna.

RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON A SUPPLEMENTAL MANAGEMENT MEASURE CONCERNING AGE ZERO BLUEFIN TUNA

Adopted at 1997 Commission meeting and modified at 1998 Commission meeting.

CONSIDERING the Recommendations adopted by the Commission in 1974, 1994, and 1996 concerning bluefin tuna minimum size;

IN ORDER TO ensure adequate enforcement and monitoring of the prohibition on harvest of age zero bluefin tuna;

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:

In addition to the prohibition on retaining on board, landing and sale of fish less than 3.2 kg by fishing vessels of Contracting Parties and non-contracting parties, entities or fishing entities, each Contracting Party and non-contracting party, entity or fishing entity shall take the necessary measures to prohibit the landing, possession, or sale in markets in nations bordering the Convention area of Atlantic bluefin tuna of fish less than 3.2 kg.

This Recommendation is supplemental to the minimum size regulations currently in effect for bluefin tuna.

The twenty-fourth session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) was attended by eight members of the Commission. The main agenda items were the conclusions of the Extraordinary Session of GFCM, which took place from 7 to 9 July in the same venue and which discussed the scale of contributions for an autonomous budget and a tentative programme of work for the intersessional period. The Commission reviewed the intersessional activities and the recommendations of the two sessions of its Scientific Advisory Committee (Rome, Italy, March and June 1999). The Commission could not reach an agreement on the scale of contributions but tentatively agreed on an "indicative annual budget" and adopted a programme of work for the intersessional period (year 2000). The session agreed on priorities for the Scientific Advisory Committee.

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